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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE ROLE OF PUERTO RICO IN UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

BY

COLONEL ELI BALLARD United States Army

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Colonel Dennis Keller Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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This Strategy Research Project takes a multi-faceted look at the island of Puerto Rico and defines its role in United States national security strategy. This paper presents facts on Puerto Rico's history, its people, geographical data and current events that support the author's thesis that Puerto Rico is an important link in the nation's security strategy. Comprehensive descriptions of military and other interagency forces stationed on the island and their missions are included in this composition. An analysis of the implications of discontinuing military training operations on the adjoining island of Vieques is included in the research project.

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San Juan, Puerto Rico

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THE ROLE OF PUERTO RICO IN UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The island of Puerto Rico, a United States possession located between the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, is a significant and pivotal contributor to the United States' national security strategy. While very small in landmass, (the main island is approximately three times the size of Rhode Island), the military and other governmental organizations headquartered and represented on the island provide critical and essential force projection as well as deterrent actions that help facilitate accomplishment of the United States security strategy throughout the region and beyond.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Puerto Rico first became affiliated with the U. S. in 1898, during the Spanish American War when U.S. troops seized the island. The Treaty of Paris (which ended the war) ceded Puerto Rico to the U. S. on December 10th 1898. The island remained under direct military rule until 1900 when the U. S. Congress passed the Foraker Act, placing Puerto Rico under an administration with a U.S. governor, an upper legislative chamber appointed by the U. S. president, and an elected house of delegates. A movement for Puerto Rican independence gained strength as pressures to define the island's political status grew.

In 1917 the Jones Act stipulated that Puerto Rico was a U. S. territory whose inhabitants were entitled to U. S. citizenship. The act provided for election of both houses of the Puerto Rican legislature, but the U.S. president would still appoint the governor and other key officials.

In 1946, the U.S. government granted Puerto Rico increased local autonomy, exemplified by the appointment of the first native Puerto Rican governor. The right of popular election of governor followed and Luis Munoz Marin won the first election in 1948. His government implemented "Operation Bootstrap," a program of agricultural reform and industrial expansion. In 1952, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was proclaimed.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Puerto Rican voters chose Popular Democratic Party candidates in some of their gubernatorial elections and pro-statehood New Progressive Party candidates in others. In 1993 and 1998, the voters favored maintaining commonwealth status even though many U.S. politicians voiced support for Puerto Rican statehood. Sila Calderon, a Popular Democratic Party candidate and the first woman governor, was elected in 2000. Ms Calderon is actively advocating ending the use of Vieques, a small neighboring island, as a U.S. Navy live fire-training area. The Vieques issue will be discussed in detail later in this composition.²

Today, three political parties remain prevalent in the commonwealth: The Popular Democratic Party is now in power; its candidate having been elected on a strong platform of terminating the U. S. Navy's live fire training on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. These negotiations continue in the wake of President George W. Bush's unexpected July 2001 declaration to discontinue the training in mid 2003. The New Progressive Party advocates Puerto Rico achieving U.S. statehood. The Puerto Rican Independence Party favors severing ties with the U.S. Much of the protesting concerning the Navy's presence on Vieques as well as U.S. military presence in Puerto Rico is attributable to the Independent Party.

GEOGRAPHY

Puerto Rico lies just east of the Dominican Republic and west of Saint Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. The geographic coordinates are 18 degrees, 15 minutes north, 66 degrees, 30 minutes west. It is important to note that the island is located along the Mona Passage: a key shipping lane to the Panama Canal (See Figure 1, Map of Puerto Rico). San Juan, the capital city, boasts one of the largest and most accessible natural harbors in the Caribbean.

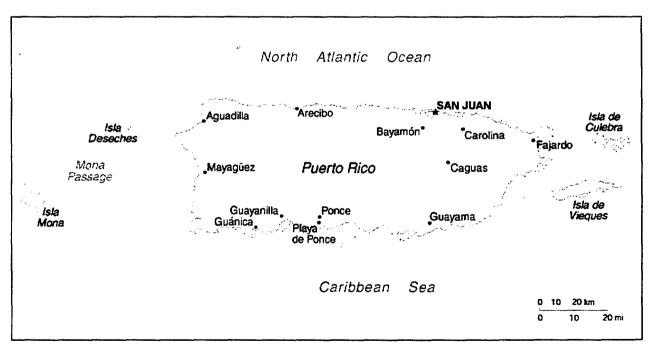


FIGURE 1. MAP OF PUERTO RICO

The central location of Puerto Rico makes it a vital area for transporting commercial goods and materials between South and Central America, the Caribbean and the United States proper.³ The early years of World War II demonstrated the strategic importance of protecting

the lines of communication running through the Caribbean and North Atlantic, as German U-boat crews sank over a million tons of U.S. and Allied cargo and petroleum in this region.

Acting at times totally unopposed, the German aggressors made a game of destroying unthinkable numbers of tonnage. The losses were so severe that Allied planners feared that we would not be able to sustain the war effort if the area could not be protected. Eventually, the Allied procedures were changed to enable vessels to move in convoys; this significantly curtailed the Germans' success in the region.⁴

AIRPORT FACILITIES

Puerto Rico has numerous airport facilities, which are capable of accommodating a variety of aircraft ranging from short takeoff/landing planes to C-5 transporters. These airports are located along the coast to exploit the more gentle terrain as well as the more industrial areas (See Figure 2, Airport Facilities). Locations and capabilities are listed below:

- Up to and including C-5 transporters: Luis Munoz International Airport, Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Ponce International Airport, Aguadilla (Punta Borinquen)
 Raphael Hernandez Airport.
- Up to and including C-130: Isla Grande Regional Airport, Muniz Air Force Base, and Camp Santiago Training Area.
- Regional Airports (Small fixed wing aircraft and helicopters): Arecibo, Fajardo,
 Vieques, Humacao, Patillas, and Mayaguez.⁵

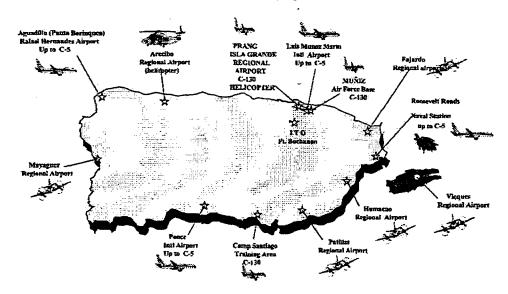
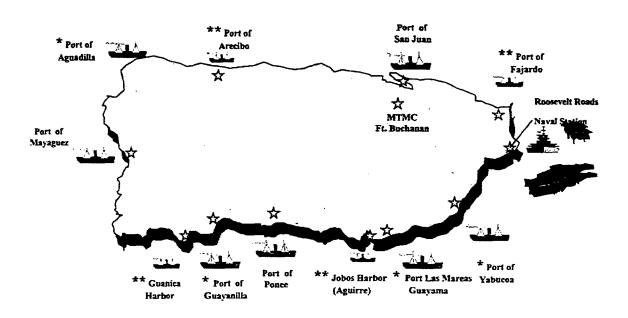


FIGURE 2. AIRPORT FACILITIES

SEAPORT FACILITIES

Puerto Rico possesses excellent sea ports that are capable of facilitating any type of ocean going vessel in the nation's inventory. In this light, the island is instrumental in not only commercial undertakings, but in force projection. The major seaports in Puerto Rico are located at San Juan, Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Mayaguez and Ponce.

Specialized (built to accommodate specific medium vessels) ports are located at Aguadilla, Yabucoa, Guayama, and Guayanilla. Secondary (built for small vessels) ports are located at Arecibo, Fajardo, Jobos Harbor (Aguirre), and Guayanilla. (See Figure 3, Seaport Facilities.)⁶



- * Specialized Ports
- ** Secondary Ports

FIGURE 3. SEAPORT FACILITIES

THE PEOPLE

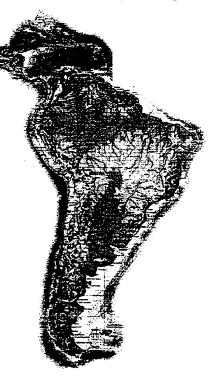
Puerto Rico's people represent a cultural and racial mix reflecting the characteristics of the island's native Taino Indians, the Spaniards who conquered the land, African slaves, Italians, French, Chinese, Lebanese and others. This racial mix is uniquely accepted and recognized as a strength of the island's culture by Puerto Rico's populace. For this reason, racial problems in Puerto Rico are rare. The population of Puerto Rico, as of July 2001, stands at 3,937,316.⁷ Puerto Rico's inhabitants travel freely to the U. S. and through their rich contributions are well integrated into our military, labor force and overall society.

THE AREA

The area of operational responsibility for military and governmental organizations located on Puerto Rico is essentially the United States Southern Command's region. This area includes the landmass of Latin America; the Caribbean Sea, its thirteen island nations, European and American territories; the Gulf of Mexico and a portion of the Atlantic Ocean. The area covers thirty-two countries. (See Figure 4, SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility.) In the wake of the terrorist attacks on U.S. facilities on 11 September, 2001, the U.S. military is considering reconfiguring Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico under Northern Command. This will provide for greater focus on homeland defense and National Guard units would be retrained for this purpose.

THE ECONOMY

Puerto Rico has one of the most dynamic economies in the Caribbean region. The gross domestic product (GDP) is currently around \$39 billion, with a per capita GDP of about \$10 thousand. The U. S. is Puerto Rico's main trade partner; receiving 88 per cent of its exports (\$38.5 billion), and providing 60 per cent of Puerto Rico's imports (\$27 billion). Major exports



include pharmaceuticals, electronics, apparel, canned tuna, beverage concentrates and medical equipment. Major imports include chemicals, machinery and equipment, clothing, food, fish and petroleum products. The U. S. dollar is the basis of Puerto Rico's economy.¹⁰

REGIONAL CHALLENGES.

The Southern region is one of the most politically volatile areas in the world. Insurgencies, drug trafficking and natural disasters have punctuated the recent history of Central and South America as well as the Caribbean nations. These challenges are still prevalent today and present a constant demand for outreach and humanitarian intervention by the United States military and other governmental organizations in the area.

FIGURE 4. SOUTHCOM AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

In a March, 2002 address, the Commanding General of U. S. Army South, referred to Latin America as "a region in turmoil." He cited Colombia's escalating war between the government and the Marxist guerrillas, the violence committed against civilians, and most urgently, the trafficking of illicit drugs. He further referred to drug trafficking as a weapon of mass destruction and cited this problem as the genesis of numerous others of the region's ills, to include money laundering, corruption, kidnapping and general lack of governmental stability.¹¹

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The United States National Security Strategy is multi-faceted and currently in a state of change to keep pace with national goals and interests as well as global threat deterrence. The overall array of forces and organizations inhabiting Puerto Rico perform a wide variety of missions, which directly support the nation's strategic goals and objectives. Some of the major specific goals and objectives apportioned to United States forces assigned to Puerto Rico and addressed in the current National Security Strategy are listed below:

- · Enhancing security at home and abroad
- Promoting democracy and human rights
- Promoting prosperity

The Following missions; though not specifically mentioned in the National Security Strategy as primary tasks assigned to the forces in the Western Hemisphere, are generally addressed by the document and are constantly performed by military and governmental agencies operating and/or controlled from Puerto Rico:

- Combating terrorism
- Domestic preparedness against weapons of mass destruction
- Fighting drug trafficking and international crime
- Strengthening financial coordination
- Providing for energy security
- Adherence to universal human rights and democratic principles
- Humanitarian activities¹²

To execute these important tasks in the Southern Theater, a well-balanced mix of military forces and civilian organizations are forward-positioned on Puerto Rico to train, equip and

employ relevant, mission-ready forces to numerous hot spots throughout this 15.1 million square mile area of responsibility.

UNITED STATES ARMY SOUTH

The United States Army South (USARSO) is located on Fort Buchanan, near the capital city of San Juan. A Major General leads this "small Major Command." The commander is directly responsible to the Chief of Staff of the Army as well as to the Commander-in-Chief, Southern Command (CINCSOUTHCOM) for command and control of all United States Army forces in the theater.

USARSO's mission is to serve as the Army component of U. S. SOUTHCOM with Central and South America and the Caribbean as the nucleus of its area of responsibility. The command routinely accomplishes theater engagement throughout the region as one of its most important missions. In an effort to restore and maintain democracy and well being, while USARSO is engaged in promoting democracy and stability, it also fosters collective approaches to regional threats and provides vitality, integrity and strength to its military allies and their institutions. When required, the command responds unilaterally or multilaterally to crises that threaten regional stability or national interests and constantly prepares to meet the region's future challenges.

USARSO provides strategic and operational command and control of assigned U. S. land and sea forces within its area of operations, defends U. S. interests and assists friendly nations within the area in the development of their militaries. The command shapes the environment by conducting theater engagement and counter drug activities, and is postured for contingency operations if called upon. USARSO programs, supports and executes a wide variety of tasks in support of the SOUTHCOM's Commander-in Chief.

USARSO divides its area of responsibility into four sub-regions: The Caribbean, Central America, The Andean Ridge, and The Southern Cone. The Command's engagement focus for each of these sub-regions is as follows:

- The Caribbean: Humanitarian assistance/disaster preparedness, counter drug, transnational threat.
- Central America: Humanitarian assistance, disaster preparedness, counter-drug, democratization.
- Andean Ridge: Counter-drug, democratization, and professionalization (developing a professional military) of the region's armies.

 Southern Cone: Professionalization, multilateral security cooperation, peace operations.¹³

USARSO oversees Army elements assigned to Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B), located at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras. JTF-B, the region's standing joint task force, performs a variety of missions to include (its primary mission) counter drug activities. The command (USARSO) also has administrative and logistical support responsibilities for the Military Groups assigned to twenty-six countries and eleven territories throughout the area of responsibility, to include Joint Interagency Task Force East (JIATF East), the counter drug task force located at Key West, Florida.¹⁴

In the past few years, USARSO has taken the lead on several aggressive efforts to stabilize the volatile area in which it operates. These real-world operations have spanned the entire scope of its mission profile. Selected examples of these operations are as follows: "Plan Colombia," a counter drug deployment in which United States forces train Colombian Army personnel to enhance effectiveness of their operations, "Trade winds," a disaster relief reaction training exercise, and hurricane, flood and earthquake relief to affected countries in the region.

Although the missions that USARSO performs are critical to the nation's security strategy in the region, it is not necessary for the command to be located in Puerto Rico. Prior to Summer 1999, the command was in fact located in Panama. Although Puerto Rico is geographically more accessible to the bulk of the area of responsibility than mainland United States, USARSO's missions can be staged from other locations. The USARSO Commanding General is currently leading an initiative to relocate the command to the continental U. S.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND SOUTH

The Special Operations Command, South (SOCSOUTH) is located at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, near the town of Ceiba on the Southeastern coast of the island. SOCSOUTH is a joint command led by a Brigadier General (or equivalent) that is responsible to the CINCSOUTH for command and control of all Special Operations Forces (SOF) in theater. SOCSOUTH provides the primary theater contingency response force and supports strategic planning for the area of operations.

SOCSOUTH is a sub-unified command containing elements of all of the Special Operations Forces (Army Special Forces, Navy Sea Air and Land (SEALs), and Air Force Special Operations) operating in the Southern Theater. The Commanding General is dual-hatted as both the Joint Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC) and the Special

Operations Advisor to the Chief of Staff and Service Component Commanders within the Theater. Within the Theater Special Operations Command's purview are the following duties:

- Prepare and execute Special Operations Forces supporting Operations plans and contingency plans as well as support the Commander-in-Chief's objectives in conflict and war.
- Monitor the in-theater war plan and targeting data.
- Determine joint Special Operations Forces requirements.
- Plan for a wide variety of methods of providing logistical support.
- Provide "all-source" intelligence and targeting support to Special Operations
 Forces operating in the theater.
- Coordinate communications support to Special Operations Forces in the area of responsibility.
- Plan and conduct Combating Terrorism (CBT) operations and exercises.
- Develop, plan and execute joint SOF training and exercises.
- Monitor readiness of allocated SOF.

When directed by the CINC, the SOC Commander forms a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). The JSOTF, like other joint task forces, is temporary in nature. It is formed for, and tailored to, a specific purpose. The JSOTF may be comprised of combat, combat support and combat service support conventional forces. The SOC Commander or other selected Special Operations trained officer may be designated as the JSOTF commander. Overall, SOCSOUTH is the CINC's force responsible for performing the full spectrum of unconventional missions across the operational continuum.¹⁵

It is important that SOCSOUTH continues to be geographically located on Puerto Rico. The nature of SOF dictates that it is highly beneficial for the command to remain engaged in the culture of the area of operation. The location supports the cultural and language proficiency as well as provides for the quick reaction of assigned forces into the theater. From its current location, SOCSOUTH can deploy without a deployment order. This makes the command's forces immediately usable by the CINC.

65TH UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE SUPPORT COMMAND

The 65th U.S. Army Reserve Support Command (RSC) provides an extensive variety of materiel and service support for military organizations operating in the Southern Command's area. The Command's pre-deployment mission is to man, equip, train, and sustain all U.S.

Army Reserve Units in Puerto Rico to ensure that the level of training required for any mission during a conflict or emergency is accomplished. The post-deployment mission is to provide command and control to non-mobilized units, provide family support, and support the mobilization station.

A large portion of the 65th Reserve Support Command's efforts is directed toward U.S. Army South. The mission, as it pertains to this small major command, is to provide logistical planning and support, manage and operate theater equipment area maintenance sites, manage theater authorized stock list, and provide back-up repair parts and maintenance to USARSO's MTOE units. The command also provides direct support maintenance to SOCSOUTH. ¹⁶

The 65th RSC is uniquely capable of providing its broad scope of services due to its unique organization, its general Latin American orientation and its regional language proficiency among many of its leaders and soldiers. A Major General heads this command. The subordinate units consist of an area support group, an organic combat support hospital, three combat support battalions and a finance battalion.

In addition to the major units, the command includes one "reinforcement training" unit which provides Civil Affairs support. Overall, the command has a required strength of 5331 soldiers and has a total of 27 deployable units. It is configured with units assigned to eleven vital geographic locations around the exterior of Puerto Rico. This dispersion provides excellent coordination and coverage of the numerous air and sea ports along the island's coast. The headquarters, located at Fort Buchanan, near San Juan, enjoys direct contact with the U.S. Army Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) as well as USARSO, both based at that location.

Pertinent operations and civic actions in which the 65th RSC has been involved include: medical readiness exercises (MEDRETEs) throughout the Caribbean, vertical and horizontal engineering construction projects in Panama (buildings, roads, canals, etc), as well as training exercises in El Salvador and Guatemala. The Command has also participated in major deployments in Germany, Macedonia and Kosovo as well as several exercises in the Continental United States.¹⁷ The RSC's presence is vital to the other organizations on Puerto Rico. Even if USARSO relocates, 65th RSC will still be an important element to supporting the regional mission as well as military and civilian organizations throughout the island.

PUERTO RICO NATIONAL GUARD

The Puerto Rico National Guard's (PRNG) contribution to U.S. security strategy is characterized in the current Puerto Rico Adjutant General's vision statement. He envisions

maintaining "a versatile organization of educated, disciplined, and responsible citizen soldiers committed to accomplishing those missions that are in the best interests of our nation, state and community." This vision is already coming into fruition in many ways due to the PRNG's high level of proficiency in their "uniquely triple" mission of federal, state and community support. ¹⁸ The PRNG's multi-faceted mission makes it vital to the island and the U. S. strategy.

The PRNG's federal mission is "to provide units to fight and win in time of war or national emergency in support of the nation's war plans." The State mission is "to provide units organized, equipped and trained in the protection of life and property and the preservation of peace, order, and public safety, under competent orders of state authorities." The community mission includes supporting interagency organizations to perform disaster assistance, search and rescue, counter drug, homeland defense, law enforcement, etc.¹⁹

To perform the wide array of tasks implied in its multi-level missions, the PRNG is organized and equipped with a versatile array of forces. These forces include major subordinate commands with assigned combat, combat support and combat service support assets. The PRNG's air assets include C-130s, UH-60s, OH-58s and command and control aircraft. Overall, PRNG forces are located generally around the entire perimeter of the main island as well as on the small neighboring islands of Culebra and Vieques.

PRNG forces participate in the full spectrum of SOUTHCOM training exercises to obtain and maintain proficiency in the counter drug, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and peace enforcement operations. They play heavily in the defense of the homeland. This includes, but is not limited to: support of the federal and state agencies in the region's aggressive counter drug program.

Specific support tasks that the PRNG forces perform include: cargo inspection (of goods being transported through the Caribbean), linguist support, case support, air reconnaissance, radar support, logistics, management (personnel, budget, operations), drug demand reduction, and communications. Supported organizations include: Federal Bureau of investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), U. S. Customs, Puerto Rico Police Department, and various civic agencies.²⁰ This organization is a mainstay to Puerto Rico. Its presence on the island is critical to the U. S., the commonwealth and the local communities.

UNITED STATES ARMY MILITARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMAND

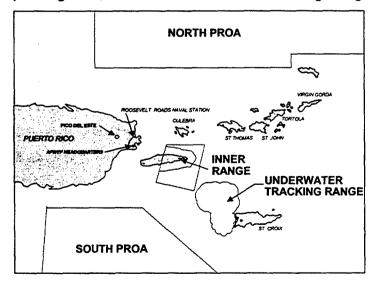
The Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) has forward deployed a battalion at San Juan, just outside the gates of Fort Buchanan. This battalion's mission is to "synchronize responsive deployment and sustainment surface transportation of Department of Defense

sponsored cargo through terminals and facilities in Latin America and the Caribbean... during peacetime and crisis, in support of the CINCSOUTH."²¹ This battalion routinely plans, coordinates and executes the transportation of all classes of logistics for movement to the intended user. The customer base is not limited to Army components, but extends throughout the spectrum of the joint community as well as other interagency organizations.

The MTMC is a major player in facilitating the power projection of U. S. assets through the critical air and sea ports of Ponce and Roosevelt Roads. These ports are capable of handling large volumes of any air and sea craft in the nation's inventory. The MTMC's planners consider Puerto Rico as an essential location for transferring forces and logistics throughout the theater for the conduct of training as well as real-world missions.

UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES, SOUTHERN COMMAND

The U. S. Navy located in Puerto Rico is driven by a dynamic mission profile that includes maintaining readiness to conduct a wide variety of Naval operations throughout the theater in support of the National Security Strategy. The command's readiness mission includes managing the 200,000 square-mile Puerto Rican Operation Area (PROA). This area, located generally in two halves; northeast and southeast of Puerto Rico, is an area of water in which commercial and private sea and air traffic are minimumized. It is used to train naval forces in a variety of combat maneuvers. NAVSOUTH also operates the submarine/underwater tracking range that is located off the eastern shore of Vieques, near Saint Croix. This range is used to train submarines in an extensive regimen of combat maneuvers, to include dry fire operations.²² (See Figure 5, Submarine/Underwater Tracking Range/PROA).



Like the non-military agencies based on the island, the Navy is active in illicit drug and contraband interdiction in the Caribbean region. On the average day, the Rear Admiral in charge of Roosevelt Roads Naval Station dispatches four to six ships and several types of aircraft to search for and capture international drug smugglers. Over a five-month

FIGURE 5. SUBMARINE/UNDERWATER TRACKING RANGE/PROA

period in 2001, the Navy, working as part of a joint federal agency with the Coast Guard, seized over fifteen tons of cocaine and heroin on the high seas.²³ The Naval station also serves as an important refueling and maintenance facility.

Naval Station Roosevelt Roads is the largest employer in Eastern Puerto Rico with over two thousand civilian workers. The Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility in Vieques also provides income to scores of families. It is difficult to address the United States Navy in Puerto Rico without mentioning the benefits offered by the Vieques Weapons Training Facility, the most controversial piece of real estate associated with the island. The U.S. Navy obtained two thirds of the island (25, 853 acres) in a purchase from a private sugar plantation owner and from Eastern Sugar Associates between 1941 and 1950. (See Figure 6, Navy/Civilian Divisions of Vieques Island, 1950-2001.)

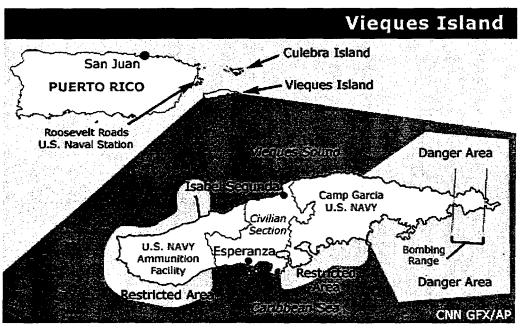


FIGURE 6. NAVY/CIVILIAN DIVISIONS OF VIEQUES ISLAND, 1950-2001

The landowners received fair market value for their properties. Known as "La Isla Nena" (The Little Island), this small island off the east coast of Puerto Rico proper is the site of the hotly contested live fire range where a Puerto Rican civilian security guard was killed in 1999 when two 500-pound bombs from a Marine Corps F-14 missed their intended mark during a United States Navy training exercise. ²⁴ This incident, the first fatality on the island in sixty years of maneuvers conducted there, sparked an ongoing debate concerning whether or not the island should be closed to military live fire training. ²⁵ The commanding officer of the United States Naval Forces Southern Command offers the following reasons why the Vieques Training Range is essential to readiness of the area's Naval and Marine Forces:

- Vieques is outside the path of commercial airline flights; military pilots can deliver live air-to ground ordnance from the same altitudes they would in combat, aiming at realistic and challenging targets.
- Ships can operate in deep water within gunfire range of land-based targets without interfering with commercial shipping traffic. Water depths drop to more than seventy feet just one and one-half nautical miles off Vieques' shoreline.
- Beaches and land formations on Vieques permit Marine amphibious landing operations.
- Vieques is within ten miles of the large port and Naval station of Roosevelt Roads.
 The base permits supply and refueling of ships, provides an emergency-landing site for exercise aircraft, and houses the range control center, necessary radar and communications facilities for operations at Vieques. Roosevelt Roads contributes thousands of civilian and military workers, and billions of dollars in infrastructure to support Vieques operations.
- The Vieques range provides acreage large enough to permit the maneuver of Marine forces and aerial and ship gunfire, without danger to he adjacent civilian population.²⁶

The debate over training operations on the island of Vieques is ongoing. This situation persists despite the May 2001 transfer of the Navy's western training area to Puerto Rican and U. S. government authorities. To facilitate a structured submission of the Western training area, the Navy distributed these lands in three portions as follows: The U. S. Department of Interior received 3,058 acres, The Puerto Rican Conservation Trust received 800 acres, and the Municipality of Vieques received 4,248 acres. Currently, the Navy's only remaining facility in the west of Vieques is an operational over-the-horizon radar site. As a safeguard against speculators supporting the Vieques protests for personal gain, the U. S. government's strategy for relinquishing control of the remainder of the land is to transfer it to the Department of the Interior when required.

President George W. Bush has proposed to discontinue the Navy's training on Vieques in May 2003. There has, however, been no suitable alternative site identified to resume the invaluable war fighting training currently being conducted on Vieques.

It should be noted that there is a large pro-Navy movement among the residents of Vieques as well as on the main island of Puerto Rico. There are continued clashes between the pro-Navy and "Fuera Marina" (Expel the Navy) factions. Although the Navy is poised to discontinue training on Vieques, the command's position is that the Naval forces will remain in

Puerto Rico due to the vital missions of force projection throughout the Southern Command Theater, keeping the major submarine range open and management of the 200,000 square mile north and south Puerto Rican Operation Areas.

UNITED STATED COAST GUARD

The Coast Guard is a vital link in protecting the nation's borders from illegal immigration, introduction of illicit drugs and smuggling of illegal materials. Because of Puerto Rico's critical location in the middle of one of the busiest sea corridors surrounding mainland United States, the island hosts several Coast Guard stations. Puerto Rico is a part of the Coast Guard's District Seven, which encompasses the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, and extends south and East to include the Caribbean and its island nations. The District is home to Miami, Port Everglades, and San Juan, the three busiest cruise ship ports in the world. This district is, by Coast Guard statistics, clearly at the forefront of their counter narcotics effort. This area has been the site of more than ninety per cent of the organization's counter drug activity since 1973. The Coast guard conducts approximately ten thousand law enforcement boardings of seaborne vessels in the region each year to stem the flow of drugs into the Southeastern United States. The Coast Guard cites the "target rich environment" as the reason for the extremely high rate of activity. Thousands of aircraft and vessels transit through the region on a daily basis. A major challenge is determining which of these possible targets are of law enforcement interest.²⁷

The Coast Guard employs command centers to interdict criminals on the seas and to pursue them to the shore if necessary. There is an ongoing operational relationship with a variety of agencies, including the FBI, Customs, DEA, and the Puerto Rican Police in order to provide seamless operation between pursuit on the sea and on land.

In addition to its ambitious drug interdiction mission, the Coast Guard in Puerto Rico is deeply embedded in its efforts to control the entry of illegal aliens into the United States. In many cases, these people attempt to leave the extremely poor economic conditions of their Caribbean countries to obtain employment in the United States. The Coast Guard acts in accordance with a Presidential Executive Order tasking the organization to interdict vessels suspected of carrying personnel of foreign nationality attempting to enter the United States without proper entry documents. To accomplish this mission, the Coast Guard in Puerto Rico works closely with the area's Border Patrol, Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Attorney's Office, as well as local law enforcement agencies.²⁸

According to the Coast Guard's Greater Antilles Section operations officer, "The reason that this area is so vital to our security is that the Caribbean is the gateway to the U. S. If a smuggler from anywhere in Latin America makes it past Puerto Rico, he is home safe. There are no customs requirements to travel from Puerto Rico to the U.S.²⁹ For this reason, the Coast Guard's efforts to stop smugglers transiting through the area are especially critical.

UNITED STATES DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is to enforce the controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States and to bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations involved in the growing, manufacturing, and/or distributing of controlled substances destined for illicit traffic in the United States.³⁰ The DEA also recommends and supports non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on both domestic and international markets. To accomplish this mission, DEA works with international, federal, state and local law enforcement partners to target and immobilize the organizations of major drug traffickers operating at all levels of the drug trade.³¹

The DEA plays a vital role in the accomplishment of the U. S. national security strategy. A major tenet of protecting the homeland is the protection of the borders from the illegal trafficking of illicit drugs and related contraband. The illegal drug market in the United States continues to be one of the most profitable in the world. Air and sea routes that feed New York City, one of the trade's major hubs, run through the Caribbean and along the eastern coast of the continental United States. South American heroin and cocaine as well as Mexican-grown marijuana are currently at the top of the list of drugs that threaten U. S. domestic stability. The Caribbean has been declared a high intensity drug trafficking area (HIDTA) under the provisions of the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988. In this light, the DEA Office of Puerto Rico is in an ideal location to accomplish its mission. It is located in the port and capitol city of San Juan; a pivotal location to intercept the high volume of illicit drugs produced in Colombia, Peru, and other locations throughout Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

While the DEA is respected for its great ability and success in intercepting illegal drugs, the agency is also highly instrumental in collecting intelligence that can be used by other interagency organizations to assist in the accomplishment of their missions. Such information as who the international and domestic criminals are, how they fund their operations, how they launder their money and who they attract as trade partners, is all very valuable data for U.S. Customs, The Immigration and Naturalization Service, The Central Intelligence Agency and The

FBI. To facilitate this strategy, The DEA participates in a Special Operations Division, a combined effort comprised also of agents from the Internal Revenue Service, Customs, and Department of Justice.³²

One of the top priorities of the National DEA is to educate and enable youth to reject illegal drugs as well as alcohol and tobacco.³³ In Puerto Rico, DEA agents direct much of their resources to reducing the demand aspect of the nation's drug problem. Having assessed the extensive effect of drug abuse in the island's communities, the DEA has placed special emphasis on planning, organizing and implementing proactive efforts to eradicate demand as well as supply.

In order to meet the enormous challenges posed by internationally based narcotics traffickers and their surrogates within the United States, DEA has developed a five-year strategic plan which is a key part of its commitment to establish and maintain a clear focus on the outcome of their efforts. In its unique capacity as the world's leading drug enforcement agency, DEA carries out its legal mandate for enforcing provisions of the controlled substances and chemical diversion and trafficking laws and regulations. The DEA serves as the single point of contact for the coordination of all international drug investigations.

To ensure mission success, DEA attacks all levels of drug trafficking using both traditional and innovative drug control approaches, focusing its enforcement operations on the full continuum of drug trafficking. This overall strategic approach is based on the recognition that the major drug traffickers, operating both internationally and domestically, have insulated themselves from the drug distribution networks, but remain closely linked to the proceeds of their trade. Consequently, the identification and confiscation or freezing of illegally obtained assets (just as in anti-terrorism) is a powerful tool in successfully destroying the economic base of the drug trafficking organization, as well as a means of providing a connection between violators and a criminal drug conspiracy at the time of prosecution.³⁴ Overall, the DEA is one of the most dynamic and absolutely necessary agencies in protecting the health and well-being of the island's and nation's region's people. Its presence on Puerto Rico significantly increases its effectiveness.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The Federal Bureau of Investigation FBI has placed field offices in fifty-six critical areas within the United States, selected according to crime trends. One of these field offices is located in San Juan. A Special Agent in Charge (SAC) heads the San Juan office.

The FBI at Puerto Rico, as well as the other major field offices, divides its investigative priorities into a number of specific programs, including: Applicant Matters, Civil Rights, Domestic and International Terrorism, Foreign Counterintelligence, Organized Crime/Drugs, Violent Crimes and Major Offenders, and White Collar Crime. The FBI has adopted an investigative approach that stresses long-term, complex investigations.

Specific types of investigative actions that contribute to the Nation's security strategy are:

- Background Investigations. The FBI's Applicant Program manages background investigations on all persons who apply for positions with the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Department of Justice and the FBI itself. The program also provides for background checks on Presidential appointees and U.S. Court candidates. Background investigations involve interviewing neighbors and co-workers as well as checking criminal and credit records of affected personnel. Such checks are critical to preventing terrorists or other saboteurs from infiltrating government positions.
- Domestic Terrorism. The FBI is the lead federal law enforcement agency in the fight against terrorism in the United States. In carrying out this responsibility, the Domestic Terrorism Program investigates threats involving atomic energy, weapons of mass destruction, sabotage, hostage-taking, and civil unrest.
- National Foreign Intelligence. The FBI is the lead counterintelligence agency in the U.S. Intelligence community. The National Foreign Intelligence Program is tasked with preventing foreign espionage, economic espionage, and with investigating foreign counterintelligence cases within U.S. borders. The program is also involved in international terrorism threats, weapons of mass destruction threats, and attacks of the nation's critical infrastructures (i.e., communications, banking systems, and transportation systems).
- Organized Crime/Drug Cases. Organized crime and drug matters are linked under the Organized Crime/Drug Program (OCDP) because many of the groups associated with these acts are drawn to the lucrative profits associated with drug trafficking. The OCDP investigates criminal enterprises, illegal drug cases, money laundering, and labor racketeering cases.
- Violent Crimes. Among the actions investigated under this heading is unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

The 1998 Strategic Vision published by the Director of the FBI drives the Puerto Rico Field Station's vision. This vision sets broad priorities on combating threats to U.S. national and

economic security, combating criminal enterprises, and combating threats to American citizens and their property.³⁵

UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE

The United States Customs Service (USCS) is the primary enforcement agency protecting the nation's borders. It is the only agency with an extensive air, land and marine interdiction force and with an investigative component supported by its own intelligence branch. The USCS office located in Puerto Rico is one of the most strategically important in regard to the criticality of the region that it serves. Using its sophisticated air assets, the USCS places the Caribbean region under constant surveillance and detects and interdicts smugglers during continuous operation over water and all types of terrain in facing the multi-faceted threat inherent to the Caribbean.

As the primary border interdiction agency, USCS faces a complex, multifaceted drug and contraband threat. They employ a variety of intelligence, investigative, and operational approaches to eradicate these threats. In addition to constantly working to perfect its operational activities, Customs has incorporated partnerships with industry, foreign governments, etc., in the fight against drug and contraband smuggling.³⁶

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the USCS has significantly enhanced its efforts in the area of homeland security. The Customs Service is positioned at the border with personnel and equipment to perform critical tasks as part of this mission. The Service has search authority, data systems, and the seasoned, experienced agents to conduct successful operations not only in drug interdiction, but just as importantly, in the interdiction of ammunition, conventional weapons, and weapons of mass destruction. Customs agents are specially trained in tracking cross-border movement of people, money, and goods. These agents are also proficient in training foreign law enforcement agents in sorting and searching people at their own borders.³⁷

A major program created in response to the terrorist attacks is the Customs Service Trade Partnerships Against Terrorism. (TPAT)³⁸ This bold program engages the USCS in a relationship with foreign manufacturers, exporters, carriers, importers and other industry sectors to emphasize a seamless security conscious environment throughout the entire commercial process. This process allows the business community and Customs to exchange ideas, concepts, and information to facilitate fighting terrorism. The program is making great strides toward eliminating trade's vulnerability to terrorist activity.

A similar program in which Customs participates to stem the likelihood of illicit drug and terrorist activity is the Industry Partnership Program. (IPP)³⁹ The goal of this undertaking is to work with the trade community to ensure the best business practices and enhanced security measures are being used. The IPP works proactively with foreign manufacturers, carriers, exporters, and many other industry sectors to emphasize the best possible security arrangements are in place.

The most specific project through which the U.S. Customs Service combats terrorism is Project Shield America. The mission of this project is "to stop the illegal movement of U.S. munitions list items and strategic technology having sensitive civil and military applications to proscribed destinations around the world, and to terrorist organizations which pose a threat to the national security of the United States and its allies." The major tenets of the program are twofold: to protect the American public from the introduction of weapons of mass destruction and other instruments of terror into the U.S. from abroad; and to prevent international terrorists from obtaining WMD materials and technologies, arms, funds, and other support from U.S. and foreign sources. These partner are active in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

The Air and Marine Interdiction Division of the U.S. Customs Service Is an essential element of the President's national drug control policy. It is a highly effective division of the Customs Service located along the Southern border of the U.S., in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Its mission is to protect the Nation's borders and the American people from the smuggling of narcotics and other contraband using an integrated and coordinated air and marine interdiction force. This dynamic force uses a mix of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft (including P-3 airborne early warning platforms and Sikorsky Black Hawk helicopters) to work in conjunction with high-speed Customs Service and U.S. Coast Guard boats to intercept, board, and search vessels suspected of smuggling drugs into the United States.

These surveillance and pursuit mechanisms are supported by a sophisticated array of civilian and military radar sites, aerostats and other detection assets. The Air and Marine Interdiction and Coordination Center located at Riverside California monitors these systems and provides 24-hour, seamless surveillance and integrates information systems with other domestic and international counter drug centers and law enforcement agencies. It serves as a focal point for tactical coordination between agencies. This complex array of facilities works in a coordinated effort to ensure that the USCS provides optimum support to the U.S. security strategy by protecting the U.S. and its interests along the southern border and throughout the Caribbean.⁴²

CONCLUSION

The U. S. National Security Strategy covers implications of military, diplomatic, informational and economic responses to an ever-increasing array of threats, possibilities and contingencies. The theater that the interagency organizations located on Puerto Rico focuses on, the SOUTHCOM AOR, is potentially vulnerable to the full range of these threats, possibilities and contingencies. For this reason, having this variety of forces located forward, in greater proximity to the bulk of the affected area, makes Puerto Rico a very important link...arguably a vital element in the U. S. National Security Strategy.

Economically, Puerto Rico has evolved from its early days as a strong agrarian exporter, to a producer of clothing, pharmaceuticals and electronics. This tiny island is still a significant trade partner with the U. S. In addition to producing manufactured materials and products, one of the great uncharted imports that the U.S. enjoys from Puerto Rico is its thousands of bright, dedicated young people who enter the U. S. military and the general work force each year.

Militarily, Puerto Rico is home to a dynamic mix of air, land, and sea-delivered forces that are strategically positioned to project the nation's power to resist adversaries as well as to offer humanitarian assistance in the designated area. These forces are poised to react to changes in mission; they will enhance defense of the homeland when called upon to do so. While it can be argued that the bulk of these forces can deploy to the AOR from any other location to perform their missions, it is clear that the forward deployment configuration afforded by Puerto Rico makes deployment much more rapid by reducing flying/sailing distances, bureaucracy, and resource constraints. Additionally, these forces perform an invaluable service, that of patrolling the littoral waters of the Caribbean from the island.

Puerto Rico is virtually an island fortress; it serves as a supplemental line of defense against the numerous types of threats that would test the southern and eastern borders of the United States. The wealth of forces that operate from the island provide continuous protection against incursion by smugglers of drugs, illegal aliens, contraband and weapons of mass destruction.

Since the late 1800s when U. S. soldiers seized the island of Puerto Rico from Spanish control, this small land mass has provided an added measure of security along the vital shipping corridors of the Caribbean. With the emergence of faster means of transporting goods, the creation of weapons of mass destruction, the growth of the drug trade and the heightened awareness of the terrorist threat, the part that Puerto Rico plays as the gateway to the U. S. is more important today than ever before. Its strategic location and its extensive array of military and other interagency forces, its accommodating deep water seaports as well as its large-

capacity airfields makes Puerto Rico an invaluable link in support of the nation's strategy to secure its sprawling borders and interests in the Western Hemisphere.

WORD COUNT = 7517

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